

Study Group - “Liberation *in the Palm of Your Hand*”

Commentary by the Venerable Geshe Doga

Translated by Samdup Tsering

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First of all make sure that you have the right motivation.

As we discussed in the last teaching you can give three things in this Giving meditation: your body, your possessions and your virtue.

The most important aspect of this meditation is loving kindness, and we are aiming to develop a strong love for all beings. So we begin the Giving meditation with the cultivation of true love for all beings, by observing that all sentient beings lack happiness, and then sincerely wish that they have the happiness that they desire.

Giving One's Body To Other Beings

Giving one's body to other beings does not mean actually giving this physical body to others. Rather it involves imagining that one's body has the quality of being able to manifest to other beings whatever they need. Sentient beings who are suffering from intense heat, for example, cannot experience happiness, so one can imagine that giving one's body brings down a cool shower of rain, which frees them from their suffering.

To ensure that the kind of love we generate is very pure and true, we should focus on the needs of other beings. The more we generate this love, the more we think of the reason for generating it, which is the need and suffering of sentient beings. Thus our love will be very pure because it is not influenced by any connection with our selfish mind. Our Giving meditation is made most effective by establishing a sound basis of love for other beings.

The Objects To Which We Give

We can give to either

1. the essence which are the other sentient or living beings, or
2. we can give to the container, which is the universe in which those sentient beings live.

Giving To Other Sentient Beings

When our object of giving is the essence it is important to imagine as many sentient beings as possible. To elaborate upon a meditation on all those sentient beings born in a hot hell realm, think about the sufferings of those hell realms as we discussed in the teachings on the small scope of the path. Feel sympathy for the intensity of their suffering which has no respite. Cultivate the strong wish “may they possess happiness”, and “how wonderful it would be if they found happiness”. Cultivate love by giving them your body to free them from their immediate suffering in the hell realms. As you give your body, you imagine that you manifest yourself as a cool

shower of rain, and that as a result they are freed from the suffering of the hot hell realms. Not only do you free them from their suffering, but also their life form changes, and they now obtain the excellent human life of leisure and endowment, enriched with superior inner qualities like the Seven Treasures Of Superior Beings¹ and Seven Qualities Of Higher Status or Rebirth²[see editorial note].

Out of your love and through your practice, not only are sentient beings born in the hell realms freed of suffering, but they also attain a precious human rebirth with good living conditions. They receive everything they need to sustain life - excellent food, excellent shelter, clothing and an excellent environment in which to live. They also obtain friends and have only wonderful beings surrounding them. With all these excellent conditions and resources, it becomes very conducive for them to follow the Mahayana Dharma, and these conditions do not serve as a cause to increase delusions in the mind in even in the slightest way.

As an outer condition of achieving full enlightenment, all these sentient beings then find the perfect Mahayana spiritual teacher, and they also find all the holy scriptures and texts which they need for their spiritual progress. In addition to these external conditions, as mentioned earlier, they gain the Seven Treasures Of A Superior Being. They all have the practice of pure morality, and based upon their love and compassion they all generate pure bodhicitta mind, so they master the three-fold training. By engaging in the bodhisattva's deeds of the Six Perfections they all accumulate the two collections of merit and wisdom. Then as a result of the spiritual progress they make, they all achieve the ultimate state of buddhahood, achieving the form body of a buddha, and actualise in their mind the bliss of dharmakaya.

You can apply this same Giving meditation to all other classes of beings. For those sentient beings born in the cold hell realms, for instance, the only difference is that we imagine giving them clothes and warm rays of sunlight. We give food to those beings born in the

¹ The seven jewels of a superior being: The gems of faith, ethics, generosity, hearing, consideration, shame, and intelligence,

² There are generally regarded to be EIGHT qualities of higher rebirth: long life, physical attractiveness, influence (prestige) due to birth in a high caste, material wealth, speech that is well respected due to being truthful, power and fame, having a strong body, strong will power. Ref: Geshe Ngawang Dhargyey *Tibetan Tradition of Mental Development*, page 102-104

hungry ghost realm, and a discriminating mind to animals. To those born in the realms of the demigods we give equipment such as weapons and shields, and to the gods we give all the desirable objects. For each individual human being, we fulfil all their needs and desires.

You can also include all the gurus and all other enlightened beings in this Giving meditation, by imagining making offerings to them which please them with uncontaminated bliss.

Going Beyond Meditation

What you are doing is training your mind in this meditation practice by mentally giving your body, possessions and virtue to all beings. Then you realise that not only should you do this Giving practice mentally, but you should also integrate it into your actions. However you cannot immediately expect to imitate the deeds of great beings like bodhisattvas who can actually give their bodies. Rather you should do this Giving practice according to your own resources and capacity.

- Try to benefit others and refrain from harming others.
- Try to be always mindful and alert in all actions in order to help others and to avoid causing harm.
- As Shantideva said in *A Guide to the Bodhisattva's Way of Life*, try to see others through the eyes of love, having some sense of consideration for them. Think of them as being your own kind mother.
- Try to see that others are an excellent field of merit, knowing that by relying upon them you can accumulate all the merit and wisdom needed to achieve full enlightenment. So see them with a great sense of love and gratitude.
- Try to think that through showing love and respect to others, and bringing happiness to them, the buddhas and bodhisattvas are pleased and delighted.
- Try to get used to this way of showing a different attitude to others.

Headings with outline numbering are derived from the Text. Headings without outline numbering are derived from Geshe Doga's commentary.

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The original typescript is prepared by Kathi Melnic from Alan Molloy's original transcript, which has been checked against Damien Busby's notes. Adair Bunnett then checks the typescript against a tape recording, and edits the text, which is finally checked by Alan Molloy.
